

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Buffalo Forge

other names/site number Mount Pleasant (081-0738) Forge Complex (081-0003)

**2. Location**

street & number 2694 Forge Road not for publication

city or town Glasgow vicinity X

state Virginia code VA county Rockbridge code 163 Zip 24555

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally X statewide \_\_\_ locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources**

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is: \_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the

National Register

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

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**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>11</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>3</u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>15</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register       

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

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**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>domestic</u>	Sub: <u>single dwelling</u>
<u>domestic</u>	<u>secondary structure</u>
<u>agricultural</u>	<u>agricultural outbuilding</u>
<u>agricultural</u>	<u>animal facility</u>
<u>processing</u>	<u>mill</u>
<u>processing</u>	<u>mill race</u>
<u>processing</u>	<u>remnant of mill pond</u>
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>domestic</u>	Sub: <u>single dwelling</u>
<u>domestic</u>	<u>secondary structure</u>
<u>domestic</u>	<u>vacant</u>
<u>agricultural</u>	<u>vacant</u>
<u>processing</u>	<u>ruins</u>
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>

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## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic: Federal  
Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century: Gothic Revival

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone  
roof metal  
walls stone  
other wood, brick

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ X D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

Archaeology, Architecture,  
Ethnic heritage: Black, Industry

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Period of Significance 1820-1870

Significant Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS)

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary Location of Additional Data

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 37.9 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

1 17 638331 4172343 2 17 638575 4172053

3 17 637991 4171794 4 17 637889 4171931

☐ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: Michael J. Pulice and John R. KernOrganization: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Roanoke Regional Office date December 2003street & number: 1030 Penmar Ave. SE telephone 540-857-7586 or 7585city or town Roanoke state VA zip code 24013

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mary Bradystreet & number 2694 Forge Rd. telephone 540-258-2770city or town Glasgow state VA zip code 24555

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name William M. and Deborah Kleinstreet & number 6 White St. telephone 540-464-4223city or town Lexington state VA zip code 24450

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**7. Summary Description:**

Buffalo Forge today consists of a large stone mansion called Mount Pleasant and several dependencies, slave quarters, agricultural buildings, and the remaining stone walls of a grist mill. The property sits beside Buffalo Creek, a tributary of the Maury and James Rivers, in the Blue Ridge Mountains of rural Rockbridge County. Numerous buildings from the once thriving iron forge complex and farm have been lost since the nineteenth century, including the iron forge, a sawmill, a gristmill, stables, dairy, blacksmith shop, coppersmith shop, post office, several slave quarters, barns, a large corn crib, a carriage house, and a covered bridge over Buffalo Creek; yet many early buildings and landscape features survive intact with excellent integrity. The manor house was built in two sections of similar stone construction. The earlier (north)eastern half appears to have been erected ca. 1819, with the (south)western section added ca. 1830. A two-story frame wing was added in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a single-story, one-room, brick kitchen wing was added to the south end of the house around the turn of the twentieth century.

**Narrative Description**

Buffalo Forge's stately mansion known as Mount Pleasant faces southeast from a terrace high above Buffalo Creek and the remains of the forge complex. The large two-story house has a long, linear single-pile plan, and is built into the hillside so that the front elevation is two full stories, and the rear elevation is just over one-story in height. It has a medium-pitched gable roof covered with hand-crimped, standing seam metal, and a broad, full-length, two-story, front porch with channeled square columns and lattice below the rail at the second floor level. There is no rail at the lower level. There are five front-facing, gabled dormers at even intervals along the roof that were likely added in the mid-nineteenth century. The dormers feature Carpenter Gothic vergeboards with trefoil pendants and sharply pointed, ogee-arched, French casement windows with three vertically divided lights each.<sup>1</sup> The rear elevation has a single, similar dormer, without the decorative vergeboards, over the central hall. Four tall, slender, stuccoed stone chimney stacks pierce the roof: two end chimneys and two flanking the central hall. Each of the four chimneys is flared at the top and serves hearths on the first and second floors.

The foundation and walls of both sections of the house are of uncut, uncoursed, random-sized indigenous stones, and are approximately twenty inches thick.<sup>2</sup> The delineation between the original ca. 1819 section and the later ca. 1830 section is clearly visible on the first story of the

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front elevation, to the right of the main entrance, although the stonework of the two sections matches quite well. The earlier section of the house has a raised stone basement, but the second story is of frame construction, stuccoed to look like masonry. The later section is entirely of stone construction. The exterior wall of the entire front elevation is stuccoed and ruled to imitate ashlar at the second story level, but the first story stonework is plainly exposed. The rear elevation is also stuccoed and ruled, so it seems likely the entire exterior was once so-treated. A one-story frame ell with slender stone chimneys on each side was attached to the rear elevation of the house, at the west end, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and a single-story, one-room, brick kitchen wing was added to the south end of the house around the turn of the twentieth century.

The fenestration of the house includes six-over-six and nine-over-six double-hung sash windows, French doors—with five vertically-divided lights per leaf—providing access to the second floor front porch, and several types of single-leaf entrance doors. There are five entrances on the first floor front elevation. The main entrance is distinguished by its sidelights with four vertically-divided panes each. A front door at the west end on the second floor level has a three-light transom. The other doors are solid with raised panels. All of the windows and French doors have full height shutters with operable louvers.

The front and sides of the house are surrounded by an early fieldstone retaining wall, and an early walkway of handmade brick leads to the center of the house. Both the wall and walkway survive in good condition.

House Interior

The interior of the house is arranged around the central hall that was created when the ca. 1830 section of the house was built onto the earlier section. The house's formal entrance opens into the hall at ground level, where a doorway to the right provides access to the downstairs library, and a doorway to the left opens into the dining room. A hallway off of the dining room leads to the one-story kitchen wing. A small staircase comprised of unpainted heart pine hand rail and treads, and painted risers, square newel post, and square balusters, leads to the second floor and its less formal spaces—another parlor and bedrooms, and also to the rear door of the house and the back porch. Beaded weatherboards on the west gable end of the original section of the house now cover the east interior wall of the second floor hall. The stairs continue to the attic rooms, some of which were plastered in the nineteenth century and used as bedrooms for children.

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Ceiling height is 91 inches in the first floor rooms and 123 inches in the second floor rooms.

Throughout the house are random width, antique pine floors and plastered walls. The dining room has vertical bead board wainscoting and chair rail, and paneled window and door jambs. Highly polished, stylish, dark green slate mantels surround the hearths in the parlors and an upstairs bedroom. These are thought to have been added ca. 1867. The earliest doors in the house have an unusual configuration of seven recessed panels and are fitted with Carpenter-style rim locks. Other interior doors have various combinations of raised or recessed panels.

The roof structure is visible in an unfinished portion of the ca. 1819 section attic. The rafters are of sash sawn pine timbers, mortised and pegged together. The roof sheathing is also of sash sawn pine.

**Inventory**

- 1) Manor house, ca. 1810-1830 with later improvements. See description above. Contributing building.
- 2) Detached kitchen, south of house, ca. 1820. Stuccoed stone foundation and walls, stone chimney with brick stack. Front gable roof covered with 2V sheet metal. Six-over-six double-hung sash windows on the east, south, and west elevations, and south gable end at loft level. Large cooking hearth and crane, antique pine floors and plain mantel. Excavated basement with batten door. Contributing building.
- 3) Garage, northwest end of house, ca. 1940. Stone construction with shed roof, one bay. The stone walls are believed to have been the foundation of the early-mid-nineteenth-century house occupied by William Weaver's body servant. Contributing building.
- 4) Springhouse/dairy, south of kitchen, ca. 1820. Two stories, stuccoed fieldstone foundation and walls. Front gable roof covered with 3V sheet metal, weatherboarded gable ends. Batten doors, one at lower level on south elevation and one at upper level on east elevation. Contributing building.



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- 5) Slave quarters 1 of 2, west of kitchen, built ca.1858. One story, stone foundation, stuccoed brick walls, side gable roof covered with 3V sheet metal, internal brick end chimneys, integral full length porch, two connected internal units with only one interior stair; mantel is not original to the property; single batten doors at front and rear.<sup>3</sup> Contributing building.
- 6) Slave quarters 2 of 2, southwest of kitchen, built ca.1858. One story, stone foundation, stuccoed brick walls, side gable roof covered with 3V sheet metal, with external brick end chimneys, integral full-length porch, two unconnected internal units with separate staircases, batten door and single window at front and rear of each unit. Contributing building.
- 7) Stone cabin, across Buffalo Creek from house, on hillside, built prior to 1865. Stuccoed fieldstone construction, side gabled roof with standing seam tin, interior chimneys-- one at each end, entrances on three sides. Interior could not be accessed. The building is believed to have been occupied as a slave dwelling during the antebellum period. Contributing building.
- 8) Shed, unknown function, east of kitchen, built before 1900. Small brick building with shed roof, single door and window. Contributing building.
- 9) Stables/barn, east of springhouse, built before 1865. Heavy timber frame with mortised joinery. Overhangs common bond, handmade brick foundation on south and west elevations. Gable roof, yellow-poplar weatherboards. Contributing building.
- 10) Corn crib, west of stables/barn, built before 1920. Elongated rectangular plan with sheet-metal-covered gable roof, shed addition, frame construction. Contributing building.
- 11) Hen house, north of stables/barn, built before 1920. Small square plan, frame construction, sheet-metal-covered shed roof. Contributing building.
- 12) Merchant mill (ruins), east of house, built before 1865. Thick stone wall construction, front gable roof (missing), most wooden parts have deteriorated. Contributing site.
- 13) Stone retaining wall around manor house, built by 1865. Contributing structure.

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14) Remnant of mill pond, south of barn. Contributing structure.

15) Mill race, leading from mill pond to merchant mill. Contributing structure.

Notes

1. The vergeboard pendants are much like those depicted in figure 130 of A. J. Downing's *The Architecture of Country Houses*, first published in 1850.
2. In an interview with Richard Halseth, Pat Brady referred to a stone quarry some 200 yards from the house.
3. Pat Brady stated in the interview with Richard Halseth that he took the mantel from "another house somewhere."

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## 8. Statement of Significance

Buffalo Forge was an extensive iron manufacturing and farming operation in southeastern Rockbridge County, Virginia, owned by William Weaver from the 1820s until his death in 1863, and owned thereafter by Weaver's nephew-in-law Daniel C.E. Brady and subsequent Brady heirs. From the 1830s until the end of the Civil War, Weaver and then Brady owned from 40 to as many as 100 slaves and hired as many as 64 more slaves per year, slaves who worked in the manufacture of iron and in agricultural production. Weaver and Brady kept extensive records on their slaves, on their day-to-day labor, on how hard they chose to work at Buffalo Forge, on overage pay that skilled slave artisans received for iron manufacture, on slave family marriages, births, illnesses, and deaths, and on slave family-shattering sales. These records have survived and have been examined exhaustively by historian Charles B. Dew, whose treatise, *Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge* (1994),<sup>1</sup> documents a remarkable history of Weaver and Brady's management of Buffalo Forge and of slave production of iron and agricultural produce. The survival and interpretation of the Weaver-Brady archival records of industrial and agricultural management and slave labor production and life, coupled with the survival of the Weaver-Brady residence, several slave dwellings, agricultural buildings, and ruins of agricultural and industrial production, combine to make Buffalo Forge a property of exceptional historic significance.

## Justification of Criteria

Buffalo Forge, including the manor house called Mount Pleasant, is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Industry because of its important role in antebellum iron production, and also in the area of Black Ethnic Heritage because of the critical roles black slaves played in the everyday operations of the forge and on the associated plantation. The site is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture because of its well preserved, outstanding early buildings and structures, as well as under Criterion D for the known archaeological remains on the property that include ruins, building footprints, the earthen mill race, and numerous sites that undoubtedly contain intact subsurface deposits. The period of significance spans from 1820 to 1870, the period in which iron was produced at Buffalo Forge, under the direction William Weaver and subsequently Daniel Brady.

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### Narrative History

#### Iron Production in the Valley of Virginia, Colonial Era to 1870

Iron production began in colonial Virginia as early as 1619. Lieutenant Governor Alexander Spotswood established an ironworks in Germanna in 1716 and experimented with iron production at Fort Christanna from 1714 to 1719. George Washington's father and John Tayloe II built ironworks in the Virginia Piedmont in the 1730s and 1750s. Ironworks were established in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia in the 1760s. By 1815 pig iron furnaces were in operation in Augusta, Rockbridge, and Botetourt Counties, and Virginia ranked third behind Pennsylvania and New York in pig iron production. During the 1830s and 1840s, 75 new pig iron furnaces opened in the Valley of Virginia. Though Virginia's production of pig iron increased during the decades of the 1830s and 1840s, Virginia's share of national production fell to 4 percent in 1850 and to 1 percent in 1860. Virginia iron production increased during the Civil War and declined thereafter, due principally to the increased availability of cheaper northern iron.<sup>2</sup>

Pig iron was produced in blast furnaces built with an outer layer of stone, which surrounded an inner firebrick-lined stack. Fuel, iron ore, and flux were placed in the top opening in the stack. Waterpower was used to force air into the hearth of the stack to increase combustion temperature. Molten iron was tapped from the furnace to run down channels into small pits, where it cooled and hardened into pigs. Wrought iron was manufactured from pig iron in furnaces that were usually walled on only one side. Again waterpower was used to force air into the hearth, where fuel and flux melted the pigs. The molten metal was removed from the hearth and pounded into refined bars by master refiners, also called forge masters. The work was hot and dangerous and required great experience and skill.<sup>3</sup>

#### William Weaver, Daniel Brady, and Slave Labor at Buffalo Forge, 1815-1865

A descendant of German pietists, William Weaver was born in 1781 on a farm in southeastern Pennsylvania. In 1814 Weaver met Thomas Mayburry while the two were lodging at the same boarding house in Philadelphia. Mayburry's father and grandfather had manufactured iron in Pennsylvania, and Mayburry had already investigated the possibility of buying an iron-manufacturing establishment in the Valley of Virginia. In July 1814 Weaver and Mayburry traveled to Rockbridge County, Virginia, formed a verbal partnership, and agreed to buy from

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William Wilson Buffalo Forge (then known as Union Forge), two charcoal blast furnaces in Botetourt County, and 6,000 acres of iron ore and woodlands. The purchase agreement provided that Weaver and Mayburry would pay \$5,000 down, with the remainder of the \$27,000 purchase price to be made in four annual payments. The first payment was to be made to Wilson January 1, 1815. Weaver began to hire slaves and manage Buffalo Forge operations in late 1814 and early 1815, but he returned to Pennsylvania in July 1815. In October 1815 Weaver, alone without Mayburry, purchased 11 slaves from William Wilson; one of the slaves was an iron worker named Tooler, who had a wife and four sons; another was a cook Mary with four daughters.<sup>4</sup>

Thus by 1815 William Weaver had agreed to purchase Buffalo Forge from William Wilson in partnership with Thomas Mayburry, and Weaver had purchased 11 slaves directly from Wilson. Contingencies affecting these arrangements, however, preclude definitive statements concerning the status of buildings at Buffalo Forge at the time of the purchase agreement and thereafter. Weaver and Mayburry did not make their initial payment of \$5,000 to Wilson in January 1815 because Wilson had been unable to secure clear title to the property. Mayburry subsequently sold his half interest in Buffalo Forge to Weaver in 1827, with payment to be made after the chancery suit dealing with the dissolution of their partnership was settled, a settlement not resolved until 1836. Weaver was residing permanently in Rockbridge County by 1823, though he apparently did not hold clear title to Buffalo Forge until the 1830s, and eventually owned over 20,000 acres of land in the Valley.<sup>5</sup>

By the time of his permanent residence in Virginia in the 1820s, Weaver focused on assembling a slave labor force sufficient for the production of iron and agricultural goods. He gradually replaced white ironworkers with slaves. Most of the slaves Weaver owned appear to have worked at Buffalo Forge, while the slaves he hired for one-year terms of service from other slave masters appear to have worked at iron manufacturing operations owned by Weaver elsewhere in Rockbridge and Botetourt Counties.

In 1830 William Weaver, then 49, married Elizabeth Newkirk Woodman of Philadelphia, then 45 years old. In 1830 the Weaver household at Buffalo Forge included the somewhat aged newlyweds, 3 other whites, and 39 slaves. Thirty-one of the slaves were males, and 2 were females of childbearing age—clearly a gender imbalance indicative of the fact that Weaver had assembled a slave force intended for industrial labor.

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By 1840 Weaver and wife Eliza were living at Buffalo Forge in a household of 6 whites and 102 slaves, 65 of whom were male hands of working age, and 12 of whom were females of childbearing age. Fifty-four members of the household were employed in iron manufactures, and 12 were employed in agricultural production.

By 1850, the beginning of the decade when Weaver's Buffalo Forge land had increased to close to 500 acres with buildings valued at \$7,000, William Weaver headed a household comprising himself and Eliza, who would die in October 1850. The 1850 enumeration of slaves recorded Weaver as the owner of 69 slaves at Buffalo Forge and another 5 slaves at Bath Ironworks in the northeast portion of Rockbridge County. Two-thirds of Weaver's Buffalo Forge slaves were male. The 1850 census enumeration of Products of Industry recorded Weaver as an iron manufacturer with \$10,000 of capital invested in the business. In 1850 Weaver used 225 tons of iron ore and 75,000 pounds of coal to produce 150 tons of iron valued at \$12,750.<sup>6</sup>

By 1850 Weaver was producing all of his iron at Buffalo Forge with 20 male slaves who received average monthly payments totaling \$260. Charles Dew in *Bond of Iron* explains that Weaver used cash to pay slaves for iron production beyond specified quotas. Slave Sam Williams first received cash payments of \$2 for "1/2 ton over Iron" in 1838 at the age of 18. Williams ended his iron refiner's apprenticeship in 1841. By 1855 Sam Williams, then 35, married to Nancy and father of four daughters, had received sufficient overage payments as the master refiner at Buffalo Forge to establish an account in the Lexington Savings Bank. Dew estimates that Sam Williams's total overage payment of \$92.23 in 1855 would equal about \$1,500 in today's purchasing power.<sup>7</sup>

Slave Henry Towles began working as an apprentice to master refiner Sam Williams in 1852 at the age of 16. Henry Towles by 1853 also began receiving cash payments for production of "over iron." Towles was paid at a rate of \$3 per ton, whereas Sam Williams received the master refiner's rate of \$5 per ton. By 1857 Sam Williams was paying Henry Towles \$5 from his own account, suggesting that Williams thought his assistant merited additional compensation. Towles's rate for overage iron production subsequently increased to \$4.50 per ton in 1858, by which time he was counted as a "forgeman" in William Weaver's ledger of slaves at Buffalo Forge.<sup>8</sup>

Sam Williams, Henry Towles, and others of William Weaver's slaves also worked in agricultural production at Buffalo Forge. Weaver's 1,500 acres of improved lands produced large crops of

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corn (7,000 bushels in 1850 and 6,000 bushels in 1860), as well as 4,000 pounds of tobacco in 1860.<sup>9</sup> Weaver's 1,300 acres of unimproved land provided forage for pigs (150 pigs in 1850 and 180 pigs in 1860). Weaver's plantation also provided pasture for 35 mules, 65 cattle, and 40 sheep in 1860). On the eve of the Civil War the farm and forge were worked by 66 slaves; again, two-thirds of Weaver's slaves were males.

As the Civil War approached, William Weaver, then widowed, childless, and in his late 70s, persuaded a key family of relatives to join him in the management of Buffalo Forge. Daniel C.E. Brady had married Emma Gorgas, the daughter of Weaver's favorite sister, in the 1840s. Daniel Brady was a Philadelphia banker. He and Emma had had three children by the 1850s when Weaver induced them to move to Buffalo Forge, where they would become his principal heirs. Late in 1857 Daniel and Emma Brady moved to Buffalo Forge. Daniel then became Weaver's overseer, estate manager, keeper of Buffalo Forge records on iron and agricultural production, and recorder of detailed journals on all slave production and economy. Daniel and Emma Brady bridged the transition from slave and master from the late 1850s through the Civil War to the postbellum years. William Weaver died in March 1863, and Brady heirs have continued to live at Buffalo Forge and maintain the estate until the present.

As the Civil War began in spring of 1861, Weaver arranged to sell iron to arsenals of the Confederacy at the highest prices that markets would bear. Prices first quoted by Weaver at \$40 per ton of iron in June 1861 rose to \$140 a ton in December 1861, to \$200 per ton by May 1862, and finally to \$560 per ton of Buffalo Forge hammered iron by December 1862. Charles Dew estimates that these price increases approximately doubled the rate of inflation for currency in Virginia over this wartime period of 18 months.

Iron production at Buffalo Forge continued after William Weaver's death in 1863 while Daniel Brady continued payment to slaves for overwork production. By April 1864 the Confederate Nitre and Mining Bureau assumed almost total control over production at "Buffalo Forge Iron Works." Iron prices were set at \$124 per ton, a figure well below current market value. By 1864 Buffalo Forge was unable to obtain pig iron for production. Supplies of coal and charcoal also grew scarce. Still, limited and intermittent iron production continued at Buffalo Forge until May 26, 1865, when Daniel Brady wrote that all slaves were "declared free by order of military authorities."<sup>10</sup>

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Epilogue: Buffalo Forge after the Civil War

Thirty-seven former Buffalo Forge slaves, almost the entire work force, signed labor contracts with Daniel Brady at the end of May 1865. Sam Williams and Henry Towles accepted contracts that provided them with forge wages set at \$3.50 per ton of iron bar, about the same rates that prevailed in the 1850s. Iron production had resumed at Buffalo Forge. By December 1865, Buffalo Forge sold iron at top market prices, about \$160 per ton, and Sam Williams and Henry Towles were each credited with \$100 for their production. By January 1867 Sam Williams had signed a contract with Daniel Brady whereby Williams agreed to take charge of the Brady smokehouse and his wife Nancy agreed to attend poultry and assist Mrs. Brady in the Brady's house when needed. Henry Towles also signed a contract with Daniel Brady January 1, 1867, that obligated Towles to perform farm or other work when needed. In the fall of 1868 Sam Williams and Henry Towles received their last wages for iron production and Buffalo Forge closed forever.<sup>11</sup>

The 1870 census records Sam and Nancy Williams living with a granddaughter as freedmen on Brady's land. Henry and Ann Towles lived nearby with their six children. Charles Dew says the Williams and Towles lived next door to each other in the brick cabins near the Brady home. By 1870 the flour and grist mills owned by Weaver and then Brady continued in operation, but none of the other former slaves who had worked at Buffalo Forge remained on the property.

Sam and Nancy Williams moved away from Brady's property after sharecropping there through 1873. Daniel Brady died in 1878, and Emma Brady died in 1883. Their son Charles P. A. Brady inherited Buffalo Forge, and like his father, kept a daily journal of life there. Charles Brady recorded attending Sam Williams' funeral in August 1889. Charles Brady's son and grandson in turn lived at Buffalo Forge. Before his recent death, Douglas E. Brady, Jr., known as Pat and head of the fourth generation of Bradys on Buffalo Creek, along with his wife Mary, restored the Weaver-Brady House and adjacent slave dwelling, and maintained the surrounding grounds and dependencies while preserving the formidable historical records of master and slave at Buffalo Forge.<sup>12</sup>

Notes

1. Charles B. Dew, *Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1994. Unless otherwise noted, documentation for this discussion

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comes from this source.



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2. Janet Friedman, *The Iron Industry in Virginia, 1820-1920, George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, Western Virginia*, Multiple Property Document, National Register nomination, 1996. Chris Stevenson of the Virginia Department of Historic resources has recently conducted archaeological investigations at Fort Christanna.
3. Friedman; Dew, 11.
4. Dew says that Weaver never told his German pietist family in Pennsylvania about his purchase of slaves in Virginia. Dew also says that the slaves purchased from Wilson provided the nucleus of Weaver's iron-manufacturing labor force. Dew, 28.
5. Rockbridge County land books in 1821 record Weaver and Mayburry "in possession" of a 65-acre tract of land owned by William Wilson on Buffalo Creek with buildings valued at \$2,028. By 1830 Weaver owned 278 acres on Buffalo Creek with buildings valued at \$4,325. By 1852 Weaver owned 477 acres of land on Buffalo Creek with buildings valued at \$6,720. The land book records do not document when Weaver first resided at Buffalo Forge, nor do they indicate when he made improvements to the house, forge, and other buildings on the property.
6. The 1850 manuscript census for Products of Industry in Virginia lists 2 forges and a furnace in Augusta County, 1 forge and 4 furnaces in Botetourt County, and 3 other forges and 2 furnaces in Rockbridge County. Of the 6 forges listed in the three counties, only 1 produced more iron than Buffalo Forge. The 1860 census for Products of Industry does not provide statistics on iron production in Rockbridge County.
7. Dew says he knew he had to write a book on Buffalo Forge when he discovered documents recording a bet Sam Williams made with a free black in 1855 that Williams had an account with Lexington Savings Bank and could draw money from the account. Dew, 171-186, 368. Sam Williams was accepted as a full member of Lexington Baptist Church in 1844. Lexington Baptist was established in 1841 by 16 white residents of Rockbridge County.
8. Dew, 189-191.
9. Other substantial planters in the Valley of Virginia, such as George Plater Tayloe of Roanoke County, are first recorded as producers of tobacco in 1860.
10. Dew, 330, 342, 359.
11. Dew, 356, 359-361.
12. Pat Brady provided an extensive oral history of Buffalo Forge and other historic places in Rockbridge County, which was recorded and transcribed by Richard Halseth in 1999.

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1860 Eighth Census, Rockbridge County, Va.

U.S. Census Manuscripts, Industry  
1850 Seventh Census, Augusta, Botetourt, and Rockbridge County, Va.

U.S. Census Manuscripts, Population  
1830 Fifth Census, Rockbridge County, Va.  
1840 Sixth Census, Rockbridge County, Va.  
1850 Seventh Census, Rockbridge County, Va.  
1860 Eighth Census, Rockbridge County, Va.  
1870 Ninth Census, Rockbridge County, Va.

U.S. Census Manuscripts, Slave Population  
1850 Seventh Census, Rockbridge County, Va.  
1860 Eighth Census, Rockbridge County, Va.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

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**Buffalo Forge  
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The nominated parcel is comprised of parcels 21-D and 37-A, shown on Rockbridge County Tax Map 98. The boundary of the nominated parcel conforms to the boundaries of the two combined tax parcels.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated parcel includes the lands that are still owned by the Brady Family, and incorporates the locus of the Buffalo Forge complex, the manor house known as Mount Pleasant, and its currently associated resources such as dependencies and agricultural buildings.

**Section photo Page 15**

All photographs are of:

Buffalo Forge, Rockbridge County, Virginia

Date: August, 2003

Photographer: Michael J. Pulice

Location of negatives: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond

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**Buffalo Forge  
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1. VIEW OF: South (front) façade of primary dwelling  
Neg. No. 20949
2. VIEW OF: Context, facing North  
Neg. No. 20945
3. VIEW OF: Front porch of primary dwelling  
Neg. No. 20950
4. VIEW OF: Interior of primary dwelling, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor parlor, facing central hall  
Neg. No. 20950
5. VIEW OF: Interior of primary dwelling, 2nd floor, front bedroom mantle  
Neg. No. 20950
6. VIEW OF: Interior of primary dwelling,  
1<sup>st</sup> floor parlor, facing central hall  
Neg. No. 20950
7. VIEW OF: Slave quarters (left), detached kitchen (right)  
Neg. No. 20949
8. VIEW OF: Interior of detached kitchen  
Neg. No. 20945
9. VIEW OF: Slave quarters, south (front) elevation  
Neg. No. 20949

**Section photo, continued Page 16**

10. VIEW OF: Stables (left), Spring house (right)  
Neg. No. 20949
11. VIEW OF: Springhouse, facing north  
Neg. No. 20949

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**Buffalo Forge  
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12. VIEW OF: Stables, viewed from front porch of primary dwelling  
Neg. No. 20950

13. VIEW OF: Flour mill, facing south  
Neg. No. 20945

14. VIEW OF: shed/garage, facing west  
Neg. No. 20949